

### *Fishermen Concerned about New Pollution, Disease Threats*

September 4, 2009

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today, Congressman Charlie Melancon (LA-03) spoke out against the Obama Administration's plan, announced yesterday, to allow fish farming in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico. Melancon reiterated concerns expressed by Louisiana fishermen and environmentalist that offshore aquaculture, a practice of raising fish in large pens and cages, would increase pollution in the ocean and spread disease to wild fish populations.

**"Raising thousands of fish in confined spaces will create dangerous new pollution hazards in the Gulf, hurting our commercial and recreational fishermen," said Rep. Charlie Melancon. "At a time when our Louisiana shrimpers and fishermen are facing new threats from foreign competitors, we do not need to create additional obstacles for their businesses. I urge the Obama Administration to reverse this misguided policy and protect our economically and culturally important fishing industry in the Gulf from new environmental risks."**

In June, Congressman Melancon sent a letter to the U.S. Secretary of Commerce urging the department to disapprove the proposed offshore fish farming plan and warning, "A piecemeal approach to offshore aquaculture regulation could also result in significant and potentially irreversible environmental consequences, including water pollution from waste products and chemicals, threats of disease transmission to wild fish populations, harmful effects on native marine species from escaped farm species, and concerns about the increasing use of wild forage fish for aquaculture feeds."

[Click here](#) to see the letter.

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